



GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

HUMAN RESOURCES BULLETIN

Secretarial Functional Assessment Task Force Findings and Recommendations

April 1999

Overview

Center Director Al Diaz created the Secretarial Functional Assessment Task Force (SFATF) in the spring of 1998 to provide a collaborative Center-wide focus on office support resource issues at GSFC (Greenbelt and WFF). The Task Force was formed to assess the implications of the office support shortfall at the Center, to identify a Center policy and approach for contracting for office support services, to evaluate existing secretary and office support positions to expand career opportunities, and where warranted, recommend changes to grade structures.

Approach

The SFATF established a comprehensive data set of information to meet its objectives by

- ⇒ evaluating previous and existing secretarial studies and initiatives performed at the Center;
- ⇒ conducting a secretarial survey and holding interviews with secretaries and supervisors;
- ⇒ conducting an office support services requirement analysis;
- ⇒ performing benchmark assessments of NASA Center, other Federal agency, and private sector practices; and,
- ⇒ holding focus group sessions.

Findings

Three primary points were drawn from the SFATF research. One is that the GSFC has experienced a 35% decrease in the secretarial workforce since FY1994. This is due primarily to Agency downsizing, career crossover, and transfers to other agencies or to the private sector. Back-fills have not kept pace with departures due to hiring freezes, and secretarial feeder programs have not fully replenished departures.

Two, the traditional approach of accomplishing office support functions within the Center is less effective and outdated in some instances. The Center is operating with a smaller secretary-to-staff ratio (the secretary supports more people on average than previously). In addition, rapid technological advances have accelerated the evolution of automation systems and processes – methodologies are constantly changing and compatibility of applications and interfaces is inconsistent. These factors interfere with the efficient accomplishment of office support functions via traditional means.

Three, a diverse set of factors can contribute positively to the effective accomplishment of office support functions at the Center. These include the number and distribution of the secretarial workforce; human dynamics such as role expectations, communication, and the Center Value of respect; technological implications such as

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access to advanced resources; and the knowledge, proficiency and willingness to use office automation tools. Also included are factors such as changing functions, classification guidelines and promotion potential.

Results of Study: Guiding Principles and Recommendations

These findings indicate that a single approach would not provide an adequate remedy for improving the accomplishment of office support functions at the Center. The SFATF created a multidimensional plan designed to address a number of factors simultaneously. The plan seeks to foster forward thinking rather than reactionary courses of action and incorporates a capability to respond to changing circumstances. Two guiding principles and five recommendations comprise the plan.

Guiding Principles

Implement a Comprehensive Strategy to Remedy the Adverse Effects of the Changing GSFC Environment and Culture, and

Define and Implement a Proactive Management Approach to Accomplish Office Support Functions

Recommendations (See Attachment for Descriptions)

**Establish and Commit to a Core Level of Civil Servant Secretaries,
Center Director Al Diaz, Champion**
(Implementation POC, 112/Debra Parsons, 6-5299)

**Modify Office Operations,
Associate Director Mary Kicza, Champion**
(Implementation POC, 300/Dottie Burkholder, 6-6086)

**Implement Professional Development and Awareness Programs,
Director of Human Resources Jerry Simpson, Champion**
(Implementation POC, 114/Sharon Johnson, 6-9122)

**Revise FPL Structure for Secretaries,
Director of Human Resources Jerry Simpson, Champion**
(Implementation POC, 113/Terri Yancy, 6-6111)

**Provide Guidelines for Contracting for Supplemental Office Support,
Director of Management Operations, Sherry Foster, Champion**
(Implementation POC, 201/Bonnie Kaiser, 6-8427)

Jerry W. Simpson
Director of Human Resources

This announcement is intended to summarize the findings and recommendations from the Secretarial Functional Assessment Task Force study. It is posted at the OHR web site (<http://ohr.gsfc.nasa.gov/>), under the General Interest button. General information about the study may be obtained from Sheri T. Brown (Sheri.A.Thornton.1@gsfc.nasa.gov), 6-2374. Additional information pertaining to a specific recommendation may be obtained from the Implementation Point of Contact (POC) reflected above.

Secretarial Functional Assessment Task Force Recommendations and Champion Designations

Establish and Commit to a Core Level of Civil Servant Secretaries,

Center Director Al Diaz, Champion

The Center has established a target ratio range of secretaries to non-secretaries that is defined as ranging from 1-to-12 to 1-to-18. Recognizing that not all organizations are alike, Directorates will evaluate their internal ratios and those who are below the target ratio range are expected to provide in their staffing plans for closing the gap and reaching the target range over a period of several years. The status of secretarial staffing goals will be reported to the Executive Council on a bimonthly basis. (Implementation POC, 112/Debra Parsons, 6-5299)

Modify Office Operations,

Associate Director Mary Kicza, Champion

A team of secretaries is working to evaluate and enhance current practices used for the accomplishment of office support functions. The team will streamline the secretarial office support functions by offering alternative and new ways of doing business. They will develop continuous process improvement strategies and innovative methodologies, and communicate these to the secretaries and managers at the Center. The action will be completed with Centerwide acceptance and support in the implementation of the recommended modified office operations procedures. (Implementation POC, 300/Dottie Burkholder, 6-6086)

Implement Professional Development and Awareness Programs,

Director of Human Resources Jerry Simpson, Champion

The Center will modify its training curriculum to add a Professional Standards Program for secretaries and to remodel the secretarial feeder programs. In addition courses will be added to provide for office automation awareness and sensitivity training for non-secretaries. (Implementation POC, 114/Sharon Johnson, 6-9122)

Revise FPL Structures for Secretaries,

Director of Human Resources Jerry Simpson, Champion

The Center has established a new secretarial grade structure to address the significant automation/technology impacts and introduction of non-traditional duties to the secretarial function. The Center will continue with an organizational classification approach while embodying modifications to the Full Promotion Level (FPL), where appropriate. Supervisors will be provided with generic position descriptions for future use and promotion guidelines for the new FPLs. (Implementation POC, 113/Terri Yancy, 6-6111)

Provide Guidelines for Contracting for Supplemental Office Support,

Director of Management Operations, Sherry Foster, Champion

The Center will establish a central contract to provide supplemental office support services to the GSFC. The contract will be a fee-for-service mechanism whereby Directorates can augment their office support capability by obtaining a range of services provided from strategically positioned locations.

(Implementation POC, 201/Bonnie Kaiser, 6-8427)

**Secretarial Functional Assessment
Task Force
Team Members**

Core Team

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